

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1095

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PLOS, EFIS, PEPR, GY, NS
SUBJECT: CHRONICLE ON GUYANA-SURINAM DISPUTE

REF: (A) GEORGETOWN 0975, (B) GEORGETOWN 1019

1. GOVERNMENT-OWNED GUYANA CHRONICLE (APRIL 9) CARRIES A LONG
ERTICLE ENTITLED "THE GUYANA-SURINAME DISPUTE." ARTICLE
DWELLS AT LENGTH ON SURINAM'S REFUSAL TO RENEW FISHING
LICENSES THIS YEAR TO GUYANESE WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY FISHED
THE CORENTYNE, THE RIVER THAT DIVIDES THE TWO COUNTRIES.
THERE IS ALSO A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WHEREBY IT WAS DECIDED THAT HIGH WATER MARK ON THE WEST
BANK OF THAT RIVER WOULD SERVE AS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN
THE TWO NATIONS. ARTICLE CHARACTERIZES THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS A "SERIOUSLY DETERIORATING
ONE" AND LAYS THE BLAME SQUARELY ON THE SURINAMERS.
CHRONICLE DECLARES THAT GOG "DOES NOT ENTERTAIN HOSTILE
INTENTIONS TOWARDS SURINAME AND HAS GONE TO CONSIDERABLE
LENGTHS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS." BY CONTRAST,
IT ADDS, "SURINAME'S ACTIONS SEEM DESIGNED TO PROVOKE
A DEGREE OF AGGRESSIVE REACTION FROM GUYANA." THE ANALYSIS
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CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT FONMIN RASHLEIGH JACKSON AND
GUYANA'S AMBASSADOR TO SURINAM SYDNEY SAUL (RECENTLY RE-
CALLED FOR CONSULTATION) HAD MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF
CORENTYNE FISHING COOPERATIVES AND HAD ASSURED THEM OF
THE GOG'S FULL SUPPORT IN THE PEACEFUL PURSUIT OF THEIR
LIVELIHOOD.

2. COMMENT. THE CHRONICLE ARTICLE EXEMPLIFIES THE "HAWKISH" LINE ON SURINAM WHICH HAS PREVAILED WITHIN THE GOG EVER SINCE FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER FRED WILLS' FIRING IN FEBRUARY. THERE ARE THOSE WHO CONTEND THAT GOG WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE SURINAM PROBLEM SIMMERING AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY THAT A FOREIGN POLICY DISTRACTION MIGHT BE USEFUL AS A DIVERSION SHOULD POPULAR CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE DETERIORATING ECONOMY AND BURNHAM'S CURRENT ATTEMPT TO RAM A FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THROUGH THE PARLIAMENT GROW TOO LOUD.

3. WE HAVE JUST SEEN PARAMARIBO'S 494. AS OF NOW THERE APPEARS TO BE NO INCLINATION WITHIN THE GOG TO MAKE ANY CONCILIATORY GESTURE TOWARDS SURINAM NOR IS ONE LIKELY DURING THE TWENTY-FOUR DAYS PRIMIN BURNHAM WILL BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY VISITING THE USSR, NORTH KOREA, THE GDR AND THE UK STARTING TODAY APRIL 11.
BURKE

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